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August 25, 2011

REFERENCE: Best Value Bid No.: S46-L24022 for Mail Processing Service for Utility Water Bills

TO: All Prospective Bidders:

This Letter of Clarification is issued for the following reasons:

- **To respond to questions posed by prospective respondents.**

Question 1 The document states a desire to create water bills with enhanced functionality (messages, charts, color....).

Answer Yes, the document states a desire to create water bills with enhanced functionality (messages, charts, color...)

Question 2 Is the City also seeking a software package for document composition? If not, which software package will be utilized to produce the water bills?

Answer No. The file will be sent as a text file or a flat file. It is up to the vendor to use what software they desire.

Question 3 Is the City seeking the contractor to provide composition services by which the City provides a raw data file (versus a print file) and the contractor composes using its own document composition solution?

Answer The COH will submit a raw data file. The vendor can compose based on their own software.

Question 4 Will the City accept bid where mailing would occur from another city such as Dallas or San Antonio?

Answer Printing and mailing needs to be produced within the City of Houston limits.

Question 5 Can you provide samples of the water bills?

Answer Yes, the City has uploaded a sample water bill to our e-bidding website.

Question 6 Pinnacle has production facilities in Birmingham, Alabama and Atlanta, GA. Will The City of Houston waive this requirement(s) below for the RFP? If so, is there a percentage of deduction for the evaluation and selection process?

Answer The primary mail out location must be Houston.

Question 7 Is postage prepaid by The City of Houston?

Answer The City of Houston will pay for postage.

Question 8 Are you using an internal legacy system for your CIS, or a 3rd party vendor? If 3rd party, who are you using?

Answer Yes, the City is using an internal legacy system.

Question 9 What is the *structure* of your billing data? I.e. PDF, XML, flat file, comma delimited, etc.

Answer EBCDIC Multi-record fielded file.

Question 10 Are bills/notices *pre-printed* 2 color front/back with variable (black + highlight color) imaging on front only?

Answer Water bills are printed duplex black and white.

Question 11 Are the printing and mailing of bills being managed by a Houston-based vendor, I.e. HOV Services? If not, how is this process currently managed. You ask vendors to deliver mail to "Downtown Houston" and/or "North Houston Bulk Mailing Center." Does this mean that mail has to "Drop" (originate) in Houston, which would essentially eliminate all out-of-city/state vendors.

Answer The primary mail out location must be Houston. Yes, currently with a Houston based vendor.

Question 12 You are asking that 1 of the DR sites be located in Houston. Are out-of-city/state vendors allowed to establish a DR site in Houston, or must we already have a DR relationship their?

Answer For disaster purposes out of state is acceptable.

Question 13 Can the mail be entered through the San Antonio Bulk Mailing Center?

Answer The primary mail out location must be Houston.

Question 14 1. We have multiple production locations, however at this time, no production facility in the Houston Metro area. Is the scope requirement (3.1-3.1.2) for having a local production facility a "hard" requirement? Also, for the alternative production facility, is there any sort of distance requirement from the Houston Metro area? Basically, will you be considering contractors that have out of state production?

Answer Yes, Houston for the primary facility. Back-up disaster facilities should be within the 48 contiguous United States but outside of Houston.

Question 15 Is this process currently outsourced? If so, who is the contractor and can you provide current contract information?

Answer Yes. For more information, please submit request to the Office of Records - Open Records act.

Question 16 Will you expand on the wish to utilize a vendors capability to provide more color, use of graphics, etc. in the presentation of the bill? Are you looking for dynamic highlight color printing, full color, black print on pre-printed forms, etc.?

Answer Please propose your capabilities for consideration.

Question 17 How many colors are currently printed on the front/back of the #10 outgoing, window envelope and the # 9 return, window envelope?

Answer 1/1.

Question 18 Will you be able to provide a sample set of data for us to review from your current system?

Answer Yes.

Question 19 Will you be able to provide a Word doc of the bid to make it easier to use the required pages for signatures in our response?

Answer In an effort to prevent any changes and/or alterations of the solicitation document, the City **will not** provide the BVB in word format.

Question 20 I will assume that we should just provide our own pricing matrix of services based on capabilities/services/options; however, in case I missed it, is there a price form that you want the vendors to fill out?

Answer The City has uploaded a pricing matrix to the e-bidding website.

Question 21 On which platform do you process or maintain the actual data for these bills? How do you gain postal discounts for these mailings?

Answer IBM MVS. Current vendor provides postal discounts as part of their solution.

Question 22 If the IBM Mainframe is your platform, the specific area we serve, you could be saving 10s, even 100s, of thousands of dollars, annually, by choosing our products over those you are *most likely* using - from the "current" industry leader in Postal Processing Software. While we acknowledge their position, we beat them in every other category that matters: speed of processing, lower overhead and extremely cost-effective pricing.

Answer Current vendor provides postal processing as part of their solution.

Question 23 If the IBM Mainframe is not your platform, I would truly appreciate the common courtesy of a response stating what your platform is, if you would be so kind.

Answer See answer to number 21.

Question 24 How does the City currently perform print and mail? If via an outsourcer, can you provide current outsourcer name?

Answer Print and mail services are outsourced.

Question 25 Does this work need to be performed onsite in a City of Houston facility or offsite?

Answer The primary mail out location must be in Houston. This BVB is for outsourcing print and mail services.

Question 26 Can electronic copies be provided?

Answer Yes, the City has uploaded a sample bill to the e-bidding website.

Question 27 Can the contractor redesign the notices/letters based on best practices and submit for approval prior to production?

Answer Yes.

Question 28 What is the structure of the data files?

Answer See answer 9.

Question 29 Will the City of Houston host the FTP server or will the contractor host the FTP server?

Answer Contractor must host a secure FTP site.

Question 30 Is implicit or explicit encryption sufficient for the FTP transmission?

Answer See answer 29.

Question 31 Please describe the data transfer security requirements

Answer Secure FTP server

Question 32 Can the documents be processed in a room where documents for other customers are processed?

Answer Yes.

Question 33 What will be the change control process for value-add opportunities that are identified throughout the life of the contract?

Answer The City of Houston desires a multi-year contract of three years with two option years.

Question 34 Is the PM required to be on site 100% of the time?

Answer No, However PM must be available during weekends and for special projects as needed.

Question 35 Will the City of Houston pay for postage, or should postage be included in the management fee?

Answer Postage is paid by the City of Houston

Question 36 Is laser a requirement, or can other print technologies be used as long as the quality meets standards?

Answer Laser printing is a requirement. However, other technologies can be present as part of your process improvements.

Question 37 Will the Water Bill Statement File contain any statements that need to be sent to the customer in any way other than a mailed statement?

Answer No, only a paper, mailed statement using USPS.

Question 38 What percentage of the bills are more than 1 page?

Answer 1%.

Question 39 What percentage of the bills are more than 2 pages?

Answer 1%.

Question 40 What percentage of the bills will include 1 insert, 2 inserts, 3 inserts?

Answer One insert is variable by demand. Two or more inserts may be done only twice per year.

Question 41 What percentage of bills have inserts?

Answer See answer for 40.

Question 42 How is presorting handled today?

Answer Mail is presented to USPS as a single-discounted mailing.

Question 43 Are files produced in manifest sequence?

Answer Vendor handles presorting

Question 44 Are there any physical security requirements around the data and document output?

Answer Yes, the selected contractor must meet or exceed industry standards physical security requirements, ie. Access controls, CCTV, etc.

Question 45 Do we need to submit the bid electronically online? If so, do we have to submit each of the forms on-line electronically and in paper and CD-ROM?

Answer Yes. Print off and sign the bid form... Scan and submit everything electronically and in hard copy

When issued, Letter(s) of Clarification shall automatically become a part of the solicitation documents and shall supersede any previous specification(s) and/or provision(s) in conflict with the Letter(s) of Clarification. It is the responsibility of the proposers to ensure that they have obtained any such previous Letter(s) associated with this solicitation. By submitting a proposal on this project, proposers shall be deemed to have received all Letter(s) of Clarification and to have incorporated them into this solicitation.

If you have any questions or if further clarification is needed regarding this RFP, please contact Eric Alexander at 832-393-8704.

Sincerely,

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JH cc: L24022 Solicitation File

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